



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

Commissioner's Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Department of Labor and Industry Awards \$75,000 in Grants.

(Helena) The Montana Department of Labor and Industry, Workforce Services Division is awarding three \$25,000 Grants for supplementary projects associated with Montana's Region 1 RIG (Regional Innovation Grant) for Economic Development entities involved in the Region 1 RIG. "The timber industry has been hit hard during these difficult economic conditions and now it's more important than ever to leave no stone unturned when exploring additional opportunities to help diversify the economy in Western Montana. These grants are a great first step in that direction", says Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly.

The RIG grants encourage projects which support regional economic development and workforce development strategies. Regional economic development is accomplished by establishing and building a regional identity across multiple jurisdictions; leveraging and aligning public and private investments; supporting the regional economy through innovative and effective talent development; and promoting and strengthening strategies that focus on infrastructure, investment and talent development and optimize innovation and economic prosperity.

These three projects were chosen out of seven applicants:

Northwest Montana Economic Development District, Libby, MT

The objective of this proposal is to facilitate the long-term retention of northwestern Montana's forest based manufacturing infrastructure and its labor force through sustainable forest restoration, while fostering accelerated regional expansion of value-added, non-cyclical, carbon neutral wood-products manufacturing and associated workforce opportunities.

Missoula Area Economic Development Corporation (MAEDC), Missoula, MT

The MAEDC is a non-profit, community based, membership organization that has been designated by the City of Missoula and Missoula County as the "lead agency" for economic development. Its project, the Western Montana Economic Development Blueprint, involves Lincoln, Flathead, Sanders, Lake, Mineral, Missoula and Ravalli counties and includes multiple activities including: evaluate and analyze the seven counties as one region; promote a regional identity with shared and cooperative resources, leverage and align public and private investments; support the regional economy through innovative and effective talent development; promote and strengthen strategies that focus on infrastructure, investment and talent development and optimize economic prosperity.

Lake County Community Development Corporation, Ronan, MT

This proposal involves a project within Lake, Lincoln, Mineral and Sanders Counties that will work primarily within and beyond the four-county region, determining skill sets needed within 5-10 existing manufacturing industries with the greatest potential for future growth, create a data base of available related training programs at area high schools, colleges, job corps centers and other educational facilities; and establish the gaps.

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For more information on the Western MT Regional Innovation Grants log onto <http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/rig/default.asp>